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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000793

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADOR AND FORMER NSA GUSAU DISCUSS
PDP PARTY POLITICS, EFCC

REF: A. 08 ABUJA 2104

[1](#)B. ABUJA 712

[1](#)C. ABUJA 716

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On 4 May 2009 Ambassador and RAO Chief met with former Nigerian National Security Advisor (NSA) General (retired) Aliyu Mohammed Gusau on the fringes of his visit to the Embassy to renew his visa. Aliyu intends to visit Palo Alto California at some point for his yearly medical visit and to pay a call on former Secretary Rice. Gusau,s main points during the hour meeting were: that the GON remains concerned about the differing views on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission; that he sees House Speaker Bankole as a Yar,Adua ally with ready access to the President; and, that he saw major realignments taking place within the ruling People,s Democratic Party (PDP) as party stalwarts posture for 2011. Gusau remains a good source on ruling PDP maneuverings, although previously admitted that he does not have direct access to current GON President Yar,Adua (ref A) . Despite this, Gusau has good insights into the politics of Nigeria regardless of not having direct access to Yar,Adua. He still remains connected to those that have eyes and ears in the Villa. We know that he politically he is solidly behind former GON head of State Ibrahim Babinginda (IBB), who Ambassador met with later in the day May 4 (see septel). A key point on PDP realignment Gusau shared for 2011 is that: Yar,Adua plans to run for now, but for any reason he pulls out Kwara Governor Saraki (with ex-Delta Governor James Ibori as his running mate), and Bauchi Governor Yuguda would vie for the PDP nod. On the EFCC the refrain continues on the USG needing to open a dialogue with the institution. Ambassador restated the USG position on the EFCC and its chairwoman Waziri. End Summary.

The EFCC

[1](#)2. (C) Former National Security Advisor Aliyu Mohammed Gusau requested to see the Ambassador to have a discussion about the USG,s current position on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and its Chairwoman Farida Waziri. Ambassador took advantage of the occasion to raise other issues, particularly inside party politics of the ruling People,s Democratic Party (PDP) in light of Gusau,s history with the party and the recently concluded PDP special

convention (ref b). Not surprisingly, Gusau began the meeting with the common refrain on the EFCC that we hear from Government of Nigeria (GON) and PDP senior stalwarts. Ambassador rearticulated the USG position and noted that it was unfortunate that the GON could not get pass this, but that until we saw results on high level issues, there would be no change in the USG stance on providing any training to the EFCC.

13. (C) General Gusau then offered his assessment of the EFCC,s limitations. According to him, EFCC Chairwoman Waziri is constrained by Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa, who purposefully obstructs Nigerian prosecution of EFCC cases. Without the AG,s support, the cases investigated by the EFCC do not proceed to the judicial phases. Gusau conceded that the EFCC has not moved on high level prosecutions of the likes of former Delta State Governor James Ibori, but elaborated that Ibori was responsible for the Attorney General obtaining his current position. Thus, he predicted that there will not be an Ibori prosecution under the Yar,Adua Government. The General volunteered that he was associated with a consultancy and was in the process of advising Waziri on possibly reorganizing the EFCC. (Note: Gusau forwarded a copy of the proposal to the Mission the following day. End note) COMMENT: The GON will continue to harp on this issue, but we understand that Gusau considers the current EFCC impasse minor, and hoped the inevitable and periodic differences between the USG and GON would be on more major strategic points instead of this issue.)

GON Governance Issues and the PDP

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14. (C) Turning to the subject of Yar,adua,s governance, General Gusau maintained that Yar, Adua currently trusts only National Assembly Speaker Dimeji Bankole and Chief Economic Advisor Tanimu Yakubu, and suggested the Ambassador engage Bankole in particular to convey messages to the President (see septel for Ambassador-Bankole meeting). Discussing the latest PDP inner workings, Ambassador asked Gusau about how party stalwarts were realigning themselves for 2011, particularly given the recent PDP special convention (ref a), changes to the PDP constitution, and whether former vice president Atiku had a chance in returning to the party. The General said that on Atiku he thought that the opportunity for him to return to the party for now had been lost, given that he had made too many political missteps. On the 2011 election, he said he understood for now that President Yar,Adua was planning to run, but that there were other options that were also being considered for the north if, in the end, he did not run again. Those options included both the Governors of Kwara and Bauchi States vying for the PDP nod. For Kwara State, Olusola Saraki (the senior Saraki who remains the godfather of politics for the state) wanted his son, current Kwara State Governor Bukola Saraki, to run with Ibori as his running mate, moving his daughter Gbemisola Saraki into the Kwara Governor,s seat. Gusau implied that Governor Saraki is less sanguine about his sister replacing him as governor than Saraki senior. The other northern option is Bauchi Governor Yuguda, Yar,Adua,s new son-in-law. Gusau did not mention who his potential running mate would be.

15. (C) Comment: Meetings with the former National Security Advisor are always fruitful for his useful bits of information, particularly on PDP party politics. The rising star of northern Bauchi Governor Yuguda should not be underestimated. Since his marriage to Yar,Adua,s daughter early this year, he has been rumored to be on the short list for the Central Bank Governorship, and now according to Gusau, depending on what Yar,Adua does as regards to 2011, could become a potential presidential candidate. On Kwara Governor Bukola Saraki, there has never been any doubt that he wants to be president of Nigeria. Whether 2011 is his time to be a serious candidate is still uncertain, but it appears

that the favored governor of the Villa may have an unexpected rival that he was not counting on in Yuguda. We will see whether Gusau,s points bear fruit. On the EFCC, it is the same old refrain. End comment.

SANDERS